



from the U.S. market. **1980** Congress passes the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act, Canada and outlines a 10-year global research plan. **1982** Congress passes laws to provide long-term, safe disposal of nuclear

# CLEAN LAND

## *From Superfund to Super Parks*

*“We don’t inherit the land from our parents;  
we borrow it from our children.” —Native American proverb*

EPA Southeast comprises the largest region served by the U.S. EPA, both geographically and in terms of population. Our region is also the most geographically diverse region of the country, which presents us with a very distinct challenge to ensure the health and survival of these precious natural resources.

To empower EPA to meet these challenges, Congress has passed legislation related to important land issues. The Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) of 1972 gave EPA the authority to study and control the use of pesticides. Amendments to FIFRA now require pesticide users to take exams for certification to ensure that pesticides are properly labeled and properly applied to avoid harm to people or the environment. In 1976, the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) gave EPA the authority to control all hazardous waste and non-hazardous solid waste from “cradle to grave.” Amendments to RCRA in 1984 required phasing out land disposal of hazardous waste, and amendments in 1986 further strengthened the Act by focusing on regulation of underground petroleum storage tanks.

While RCRA helps regulate waste disposal, the 1980 Comprehensive Environmental Response Compensation and Liability Act (Superfund) authorized the cleanup of uncontrollable or abandoned hazardous waste sites as well as accidents, spills and other emergency releases. These statutes have had a great impact on EPA Southeast’s role with regard to land use and preservation.

Historically, southeastern land use has been agriculturally based. While agriculture provides us with our foods, it also contributes to pesticide, herbicide and animal waste pollution of our soil and water as well as a general loss of forests, erosion of topsoil and silt runoff. EPA Southeast and our farmers are working together to learn more about these complicated issues and find better ways to minimize environmental risks and to incorporate environmental practices in daily agricultural operations.

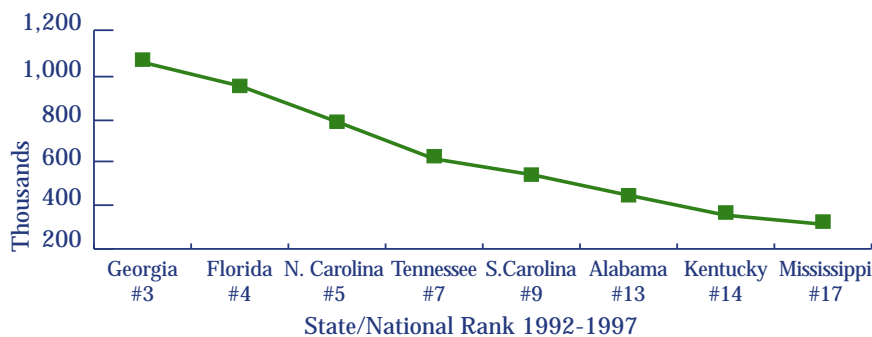
EPA Southeast is also focused on environmental factors accompanying our vast change in land use from agriculture to industry. One challenge that we now face is the phenomenon of *edge effects*, or conflicts arising from the proximity





*Trees are important to the prevention of soil erosion*

### Conversion of Undeveloped Land 1992-1997 (in acres)



*All southeastern states ranked among the top 20 states in land conversions; three of the top five fastest developing areas in the nation were in the Southeast.*

### RCRA And Hazardous Waste

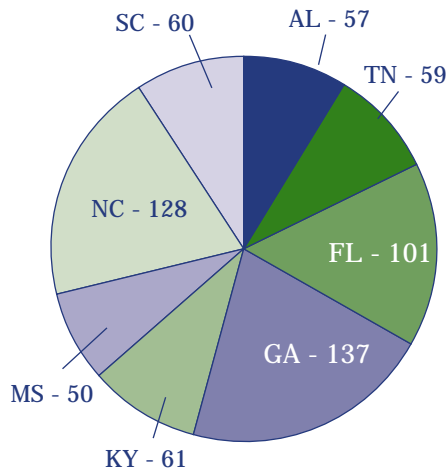
Using the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA), EPA Southeast is able to oversee the transportation, generation and storage of hazardous waste in our region. Since 1981, RCRA has facilitated the closure of 758 of the 760 hazardous waste land disposal facilities in the Southeast. The two facilities that remain operational are required to extensively treat and stabilize all flammable, corrosive, toxic, reactive and/or explosive waste prior to disposal. Additionally, more than 40 of the 70 hazardous waste incinerators operating in 1991 are now non-operational and those remaining are operating under strict permits. Our states play an important role in regulating hazardous waste, and nearly every state in our region is fully authorized to implement the federal RCRA regulations. With our state partners, we are successfully controlling and regulating hazardous waste in the Southeast.



killing more than 2,000 people. 1985 Union Carbide plant at Institute, W.V., releases methyl isocyanate, bringing home the concept layer is opening up each spring over the Antarctic. 1986 Congress increases Superfund to \$8.5 billion, creates mechanisms to

## Superfund Removal Actions

653 Total Removal Actions  
(1980 to Present)



*Through the Superfund program, EPA SE screens suspected hazardous waste sites to determine the extent and type of response needed. Response actions include removal and remediation (long-term cleanup). In our region, 653 removal actions have occurred since 1980.*

of two very different land uses. Incompatibility between new urban areas and agricultural areas can bring unwelcome complications. Airborne drift from farm chemicals and dust can have very negative health impacts on heavily populated, residential areas. Conversely, toxic urban runoff and urban air pollution can damage crops and waterways and endanger livestock.

EPA Southeast has made significant strides in pioneering new ways of handling and disposing of hazardous materials like pesticides.

## Use Pesticides Wisely

Pesticides should only be applied for those uses clearly identified on the container. Using pesticides for a purpose they are not intended—for example, to poison unwanted animals, can lead to serious injury or death to domestic animals and children. It may also lead to prosecution of the person who applies the pesticide and the person who supplied it. This illegal practice has resulted in the death of many animal species, including endangered ones.

Homeowners should be very careful when applying pesticides in or around the home. Do not accept pesticides from neighbors or friends unless they are clearly labeled for home use and in their original container. In recent years, some homeowners have applied a highly toxic pesticide known as methyl parathion that is intended for agricultural use

only. The use of this pesticide inside homes in the Pascagoula, Mississippi area resulted in the evacuation of 1,756 individuals and the decontamination of 399 homes. There are many highly effective pesticides that can be safely and legally applied by both homeowners and licensed pesticide professionals. Information on what pesticides to apply in or around your home can be obtained from the Cooperative Extension Service in your area.



## Here's What You Can Do to Help Protect Our Land:

- Read labels and properly dispose of all hazardous household items, like paint and petroleum products.
- Use lawn fertilizers and pesticides properly and sparingly.
- Use plants or manmade barriers to control soil erosion.
- Protect the trees on your property and contact your Forestry Department or Cooperative Extension Service if you suspect any health problems related to your trees.
- Plant a tree. This is a great way to help the environment and mark special occasions in your life or your family's life.